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QTIC election pitch

QUEENSLAND Tourism Industry Council is using this month's state election to "seize upon major tourism opportunities to accelerate employment figures and business prosperity".

CE Daniel Gschwind said QTIC hopes to see continuity in working towards Qld's 2020 tourism targets and 20 year plan. "We don't want these changed. We've made good progress and we need to stick with this course.

"Tourism operators are looking for an increased, competitive investment from the government for marketing and events with budget certainty for the next four years," he said in an update to members of the organisation.

Gschwind urged the govt to "pull out all the stops" to protect and preserve Qld's natural assets.

NYC & Co manager

WALSHE Group has appointed Cindy Gilbert as the new sales & marketing manager for NYC & Company in Australian and NZ.

Most recently with Emirates, Gilbert will be the 'go to' person for New York City queries from trade partners.

AirAsia "misled" MEL pax

AIRASIA has come under fire from consumer group CHOICE after the low-cost carrier pulled its planned Melbourne-Bali service on Christmas Day (TD 29 Dec).

Inaugural flights to Melbourne on the AirAsia offshoot - Indonesia AirAsia Extra - were supposed to commence on 27 Dec, four days later than first slated.

However, the carrier was forced to shelve the service after it failed to gain regulatory approval to commence flights from Bali.

CHOICE said travellers were left "high and dry" and instead of the six-hour direct flight to the Indonesian holiday destination, they now face a 13-hour journey via Malaysia.

"In this case, we believe AirAsia misled consumers by advertising and selling a flight on a route they hadn't yet been approved to fly.

"Consumers are entitled to seek compensation for out-of-pocket

expenses, such as unexpected accommodation costs or the cost of booking another airline, if they have been misled by a service provider," CHOICE said yesterday.

Pax caught out are advised to take up the matter with AirAsia or contact Fair Trading in their state.

New Hawaii webinar

A SECOND training video for the Islands of Aloha has been uploaded to the Hawaii Tourism Oceania YouTube channel.

The 10-minute module focuses as an introduction to the Big Island of Hawaii, presented by the Big Island Visitors Bureau.

Local Sanctuary reps

BOUTIQUE safari camp & lodge operator Sanctuary Retreats has appointed iD Collective as its first PR agency in Australia.

The company was established in 1999 and now has a portfolio of 16 properties in Southern and East Africa (Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania, Uganda & Zambia) plus six cruise ships in Myanmar, China & Egypt - sanctuaryretreats.com.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today has six pages of news & photos, plus a full page from: (*click*):

- AA Appointments jobs

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Travel Daily

First with the news

Wednesday 14th January 2015



New GSA wins for Venture

ADELAIDE-BASED wholesaler Venture Holidays has been named as the new general sales agent (GSA) for two tour firms operating in Africa and China.

The company will now carry out reservations and sales activity for Acacia Africa and China Links Travel in the Australian market.

Acacia Africa operates overland safari tours, treks and short breaks, with a range of products tailored to suit families, and had contracted Adventure World as its GSA for many years.

YNOT Concepts, headed up by Rob Gurr, will continue to handle local representation, sales and marketing for Acacia Africa.

China Links Travel is owned by Chinese national Helen Li and is based in the UK, with small group tours, accommodation & tailored FIT product in China, Indochina, Japan and South Korea.

Venture Holidays managing director Robert Mackay said the company plans to introduce a host of overseas products to the local market, including some that had not been previously available.

"We look for products that

broaden and enrich the travel experiences currently being offered here - supported by the high level of service provided by Venture Holidays," he said.

Venture Holidays also handles GSA duties for Totally India, an account it launched to the Australian market in Sep 2013.

It will also launch Calypsonet booking functionality to the Australian trade from next week.

Journey Beyond rails

GREAT Southern Rail will debut a new TV commercial this week showing the ease that Australian landmarks can be accessed by rail.

The campaign dubbed "Journey Beyond" will also be seen on cinema screens and online.

CLICK HERE to view the new ad.

Abu Dhabi TD winner

HOME-BASED agent network TravelManagers has another *Travel Daily* competition winner in its ranks after Kim Mason was the successful entrant in *TD's* Abu Dhabi monthly comp for Dec.

Mason has won return flights to AUH with Etihad, four nights at the Shangri-La Qaryat Al Beri & more.

NF launch teen fares

AIR Vanuatu has bridged the gap between child and adult airfares, launching a new range of fares for travellers 12-17 in age who are accompanied by an adult.

Return teen fares start at \$415 ex BNE to Port Vila or on direct int'l flights to Espiritu Santo.

SYD and MEL fares are priced at \$460 and \$479 respectively.

Fares are on sale until 27 Feb for travel to 04 Dec, or 15 Oct ex MEL.

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Managers roll out new branding

CUSTOMERS of home-based group TravelManagers are now seeing the company's new branding and clover logo in the market, with all Personal Travel Managers now sporting the mark. Unveiled at the company's 2014

conference in Singapore mid-last year (**TD** 18 Aug), the company says the new logo aims to showcase the personal, dedicated and confident touch offered by PTMs while seeking to inspire.

A tagline of "As Individual as You Are" accompanies the new logo, with both appearing on a suite of new collateral ranging from car decals, websites, promo banners, ticket wallets, bag tags and more.

The company's main website has also been adjusted with new user-friendly features, optimised for viewing on multiple devices.

"Our new logo is all about the individual relationships every personal travel manager has with each of their clients," TravelManagers executive general manager Michael Gazal said.

Branding agency Principals worked closely with existing PTMs to design the new brand.

Record year at Airbus

AIRCRAFT manufacturer Airbus has exceeded its 2014 targets, reporting a record 629 jet deliveries for 89 customers.

The delivery list comprised 490 A320 family aircraft, 108 A330s, 30 A380s and its first A350 XWB.

President Fabrice Brégier said "2014 has been an excellent year and the teams in Airbus not only delivered on, but exceeded their targets and commitments".

MEANWHILE, Airbus has upped its aircraft prices for 2015, with the A380 superjumbo now priced at a mere US\$428 million.

Virgin Hotels app

A NEW mobile app dubbed 'Lucy' has been introduced by Virgin Hotels to act as a "personal hotel assistant" for guests.

'Lucy' is able to fulfil requests for services and amenities, the new hotelier said, "functioning as the room thermostat, streaming personal content and more".

Guests can also use Lucy to request in-room dining, make dinner reservations and assist with check-in and check-out.

Hoedspruit by train

SOUTH Africa's iconic The Blue Train has announced its schedule for 2016 is set to include two return services between Pretoria and Hoedspruit.

Services will run on 08 Jul & 12 Aug from Pretoria to Hoedspruit, returning the next day.

Local rep Herbie Rosenberg said the journey will enable agents & wholesalers to package The Blue Train with safari lodges.

The train will cater for up to 80 guests including a conference car.

Insight guide videos

A COLLECTION of short videos showcasing the highlights and Signature Experiences available in Europe on Insight Vacations trips has been made public.

Accessed via Insight Vacations' YouTube page, the videos cover 12 of the guided touring company's itineraries, including the Country Roads of Bavaria, Switzerland and Austria, Easy Pace France, Romantic European, Focus on Ireland, Country Roads of Scotland, Best of Italy & more.

MD Joost Timmer said agents would find the video clips a great resource to provide background on inclusions and experiences.

Each video is around 2 minutes in length and features an Insight tour director sharing their passion for a destination and the firm.

"We want agents to be able to speak about our escorted journeys with real authority or to recommend the videos to clients who are considering travelling with Insight," Timmer said.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Hilton to Pullman

ACCOR chief operating officer of Asia Pacific Simon McGrath says the planned upgrade of the newly rebranded Pullman Melbourne on the Park will provide a "major boost" to the Victorian capital's hotel sector.

The property previously traded as Hilton on the Park up until 31 Dec before owners switched the management contract to Pullman.



Window Seat

IT'S too early to be April Fool's Day, but there is scepticism as to whether or not this proposal will actually float.

A Japanese architecture firm has revealed renderings of the world's first underwater city, which it says could be built by 2035, *Huffington Post* reports.

The spherical structure is over four football fields in length, extends two miles deep into the sea, features a deep-sea gondola and could be home for businesses, hotels & residents.

Shimizu Corporation says the project is a solution to rising sea levels - [CLICK HERE](#) for more.



The 'Blue Garden' sphere

NOW why did it take so long to come up with this concept?

A pop-up shop in Belfast that exclusively sells crisp sandwiches has sold out of product within two hours of opening its doors.

The world-first Simply Crispy outlet is destined to be popular with tourists, boasting over 35 flavours of crisps & served on a variety of breads with sauces.

Customers can also elect to add meat or cheese to their 'butty'.

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Expedia tech rollouts

GLOBAL launches of two new products aimed at mobile travel bookers are on the drawing board for Expedia this year following soft test phases in the US.

A new feature entitled 'Real-Time Feedback' offers a short survey to guests upon check-in and allows hoteliers to respond more quickly to guest concerns to avoid an overall negative review.

The second new enhancement, Sell Tonight, notifies hoteliers of the rates of nearby competitors & simplifies the process for hotels to compete with last-minute deals.

Both developments utilise the Expedia PartnerCentral interface to liaise with hotels & travellers.

Denby clarification

OUR apologies to Buchan's PR executive Anna Denby, appointed to handle the China Southern Airlines account in Australia and New Zealand (**TD** yesterday).

Denby has nine years travel & tourism experience and was most recently with The Narrative and Unique Tourism Collection.

Free visa promise fail

AUSTRALIAN tourists arriving at Bali and Jakarta Airports after 01 Jan are being greeted with indifference about a recent announcement to introduce free visitor visas to enter Indonesia.

In Nov last year, it was widely reported by mainstream and industry media that the US\$35 charge for a 30-day visitor visa had been scrapped for Australians and four other nationalities, with the move in effect from 01 Jan.

The fee removal was aimed as a measure to help meet ambitious long-term tourist arrival targets.

Indonesia is currently on a push to attract 20 million tourists per year by 2019 (**TD** 27 Aug).

However, it appears the promise has failed to materialise, with Aussies continuing to be charged at the border on arrival.

Following a wave of complaints from travel agents and tourists, the Director General of Immigration in Jakarta has issued a clarification saying the visa policy remains unchanged.

The department said that while suggestions to expand the free visa policy have been mooted, no official order has been given.

According to the Smartraveller website, the page for Indonesia continues to refer to the US\$35 entry fee charged at Immigration.

Emirates serves up Sharapova



ABOVE: Emirates served up a smashing start to 2015 for these Brisbane-based retail and cargo agents who were fortunate to meet tennis ace Maria Sharapova (**centre**) last weekend during the 2015 Brisbane International.

EK is the official airline partner of the Emirates Australian Open Series and the Australian Open.

Maserati rentals

AVIS Car Rental has introduced the 2015 Maserati Ghibli to its rental fleet option in the USA.

The 3-litre twin-turbocharged V6 joins Avis' Signature Series, which also includes the Chevrolet Corvette, Lincoln Navigator, BMW X5 and Mercedes GL450.

Ghibli's are available for collection in Dallas, Orlando, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Phoenix, San Francisco and South Florida.

Mandarin Marrakech

HONG Kong-based luxury hotel brand Mandarin Oriental will open a new resort outside the Moroccan capital of Marrakech.

The property will feature 61 villas & suites each inclusive of a private pool, three restaurants and a spa facility, set on an estate outside of the city.

An official opening date has not yet been announced.

DL plots LAX/PVG

DELTA Air Lines has sought approval to launch a new daily nonstop service between Los Angeles and Shanghai Pudong.

The SkyTeam carrier intends to commence the route from 09 Jul, utilising 777-200LR aircraft.



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No cryin' from these hound-dogs



INSIGHT Vacations recently escorted a group of Aussie travel agents through the deep south of the USA, entrenching in them a love of all things southern.

Tracing the steps of the tour operator's 'Rhythm & Flavours of America' itinerary, the group enjoyed first-class luxury, country music, local foods and more.

Kicking things off in the Windy City of Chicago, the group lapped up the luxury for a few days at the Ritz-Carlton Chicago before beginning the journey south.

In Nashville and Memphis, the toe-tapping beats of country, blues and RnB music permeated the airwaves, with many a classic tune belted out as the group got to grips with music history and the sights frequented by some of the biggest names to play a beat.

Highlights of the agents' time in New Orleans included mixing with alligators, turtles and snakes of the Louisiana bayous, marshes and swamps, with a visit to a cotton plantation also popular.

Signature Dining was also on the menu, including the only Four-Diamond restaurant in Kentucky and a true Southern dinner with plenty of tantalising Cajun flavours at Monmouth Plantation.

Pictured above getting their 'King of Rock'n'Roll' on from left is John Fitzpatrick, Bendigo Travel & Cruise Centre; Peter Flynn, Maranoa Travel Centre; Barrie Maxwell-Jones, Extragreen Holidays; Joost Timmer, Insight Vacations; Lee Evanson, Insight Vacations; Jeremy Riethmuller, Where in your World Travel and Cruise; Brian Cruwys, Travel Rockhampton and Garry Galea of Flight Centre North Essendon.

LH hands over to 4U

LUFTHANSA has completed the handover process of European point-to-point routes not starting from its Munich or Frankfurt hubs to its low-cost unit Germanwings.

The LH subsidiary has now taken over 115 routes from its parent carrier, most of which depart from Dusseldorf.

Wilpena Pound offer

GUESTS booking Wilpena Pound Resort and its new safari camp Ikara can obtain a free \$50 fuel voucher when staying two or more nights before 31 Mar.

The promo is valid if booked before 31 Jan - call 1800 805 802.

Travel Daily

First with the news

Wednesday 14th Jan 2015

RCI agent incentive

ROYAL Caribbean has launched a 'sell three, sail free' trade deal for agents who book three or more select 10- and 12-night cruises on *Radiance of the Seas* or *Rhapsody of the Seas* in Jan.

Each itinerary operates round trip from the South Pacific ex Sydney, departing on 17, 20, 28 and 31 Jan.

The agent reward is a free cruise for two on a local Royal Caribbean voyage for up to seven nights.

MEANWHILE, Royal Caribbean has a three-day mega-sale on local voyages with prices from \$81 per day, on sale to 16 Jan.

Le Club X4 points

MEMBERS of Le Club Accor Hotels can earn quadruple points when staying at new hotels in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Wollongong before 28 Feb.

Properties include Inchcolm Hotel & Suites in Brisbane and Novotel Wollongong Northbeach.

The promo is also available at new Accor hotels in Hong Kong, Mexico, Thailand, Brazil & Japan, if booked before 31 Jan.

Further, triple bonus points are offered at over 500 hotels across Asia Pacific.

Indonesia clamp LCCs

AVIATION authorities in Indonesia have set a minimum price floor on domestic flights in a measure to ensure low-cost carriers don't compromise safety.

The Transport Ministry imposed the new rule in the days following the crash of Indonesia AirAsia flight QZ8501 into the Java Sea.

Officials said the aim of the rule was to increase airline profit margins to allow them to spend more on safety.

"We want the aviation sector to be healthy, not cheap," Indonesian Transport Minister Ignasius Jonan said.

"If it's cheap, there are many things that might not be done."

Garuda Indonesia chief executive Arif Wibowo said the move will in fact benefit airlines and protect them from competitors employing predatory price tactics.

Edwardian free b'fast

GUESTS of any Radisson Blu Edwardian Hotel in London will receive complimentary full English breakfast for stays through until 28 Feb.

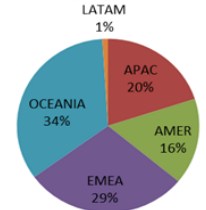
The promotion is valid for properties in London, Guildford or Manchester booked using the access code of 'RD' on the GDS.



THE TAAP TOP TEN

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Expedia TAAP Destinations
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Expedia TAAP closed the year with an outstanding trading month for December with triple digit growth YOY. 540 destinations were booked through Expedia TAAP in December. The top ten destinations booked were Sydney, Melbourne, London, Singapore, New York, Paris, Kowloon, Los Angeles, Surfers Paradise and Brisbane. Oahu, Cairns and Rome were just outside the top 10. Oceania still the dominant region but dropping 4% to 34%, EMEA up 4% to 29% compared to November figures. USA was up 2% to 16% last month while APAC was down 1% to 20% of the destination mix.

Oceania was the stand out growth destination for 2014, with December figures up 8% Year On Year although the trend is now moving back to EMEA and USA.

Some of the out of the way destinations last month included Steamboat Springs in CO, Sendai in Japan, Curitiba in Brazil and Blackpool in the UK. Your great service and our great rates, keep your customers coming back.



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The Leading Airline from Taiwan

Hawaii debuts in R&C

LUXURY Maui property the Hotel Wailea has become the first in Hawaii to be admitted to the Relax & Chateaux collection.

The resort is in the middle of a US\$15m renovation project to be completed in Q2 this year.

Dec lull for SYD hotels

SYDNEY saw nil demand growth among hotel occupancies for the month of Dec as business wound down for the year, according to the latest data from STR Global.

The city recorded a 1% increase in supply, while demand was unchanged, leading to a decrease of 1% in occupancy to 80%.

QR Saudi line delayed

GOVERNMENT red tape is delaying the launch of Qatar Airways' domestic subsidiary in Saudi Arabia, with plans in place now to launch within 18 months.

The Doha-based carrier has held ambitions of starting its own operations in the country for several years and was awarded its license in 2013 (**TD** 20 Nov 2013).

After planning to begin flights in the third quarter of 2014, the carrier - to be known as Al Maha Airways - is now being delayed by "complex bureaucracy", QR chief executive Akbar Al-Baker said.

Bamaga appointment

CAPE York Peninsula Lodge (previously known as Resort Bamaga) has appointed Nikki Allison to the position of general manager, effective immediately.

Allison was most recently employed at Cicada Lodge.



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Accommodation Updates

WELCOME to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wednesday feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au.



Nestled around a picturesque and leafy lake, the **NRMA Darlington Beach Holiday Park** has opened a number of new Lagoon Safari Tents designed to introduce "glamping" or luxury camping to the region. Each tent overlooks the lake and features an ensuite bathroom, kitchenette, covered verandah, private BBQ, TV and DVD player, with close access to resort facilities.



New Zealand's **Whare Kea Lodge and Chalet** has reopened as a luxury serviced lodge for guests visiting the scenic Lake Wanaka region. For the 2015 winter season, the resort is also available for groups to rent in its entirety, which was its original purpose upon building. Its design as a family home evokes feelings of instant comfort, with each bedroom offering a private ensuite and deck.



Eco-boutique Chinese property **URBN Hotel Shanghai**, managed by the Cachet Hotel Group, has revealed its new look after a major internal makeover by celebrity fashion designer Jay Godfrey. Locally sourced, recycled and reclaimed materials were used, with a modern Zen design the target. Thai silk and velvets aim to neutralise the ultra-modern and contemporary feel.

RWC 2015 TVCs

VISITENGLAND has launched a new TV ad to promote the Rugby World Cup 2015 to overseas markets, aimed at enticing people to visit the country this year.

An ad tailored to the domestic market has also been rolled out.

Both ads can be viewed on VisitEngland's social media pages on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, or **CLICK HERE** to watch the 60-second international TVC.

UK chauffeur comm

AGENTS are being provided with 15% commission on all UK Chauffeur Drive bookings for UK services through Tristar.

The incentive is based on reservations made up until 31 Mar, with commission to be sent automatically to the agent via their account number.

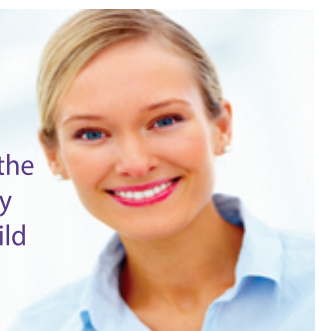
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